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Virginia Racing Commission Announces Retirement of Executive Secretary

Richmond, VA (October 17, 2007) – The Virginia Racing Commission (VRC) announced at its monthly meeting that Executive Secretary Stan Bowker will retire from the Commission in September 2008. He will be retiring after a decade of service to the Commission and horse racing in Virginia and a 40-year career in racing.

Bowker joined VRC in September 1998 as senior steward. In June 1999, he replaced Don Price, who was retiring as executive secretary. Since then he has been serving in the dual capacity of executive secretary and senior steward.

“Stan’s commitment to the integrity of horse racing in Virginia made him a tremendous asset to both the Commission and the Commonwealth,” said Peter Burnett, chairman of the Virginia Racing Commission. “His passion for the industry promotes excellence and honesty as the hallmarks of Virginia racing. We are privileged that we will continue to be the beneficiary of his expertise by bringing him back to Virginia as senior steward each summer for the Thoroughbred meet.”

“It has been an honor to serve as executive secretary of the Commission,” Bowker said. “I am very fortunate to have worked with so many outstanding racing Commissioners who are dedicated to the racing industry in Virginia.”

During Bowker’s tenure several VRC chairman helped Virginia become highly regarded in the pari-mutuel racing industry. One example was when Chairman Robin Williams developed a national license that is now utilized by owners, trainers, jockeys, drivers and others to make licensing in each state easier. In addition, current Chairman Peter Burnett heads up the Association of Racing Commissioners International (ARCI), a national organization of regulators. Burnett is also leading an effort on uniform regulation of medication, including steroids. In the past, he served on the group of regulators that developed the details that resulted in the reunification of ARCI and the North America Pari-mutuel Regulators Association.

In addition to his duties at VRC, Bowker is active on national issues. He currently serves as chairman of the Racing Officials Accreditation Program, the organization that provides accreditation for national stewards and judges. Also, he is chairman of the Executive Directors

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and Secretaries Committee and a member of the Model Rules Committee that develops rules for racing on a national level.

After a brief period as a sports reporter, Bowker's career in the equine industry began in 1968, when he joined the management staff at Ak-Sar-Ben in Omaha, NE. During his 17 ½ years at Ak-Sar-Ben, he was in charge of marketing, advertising, public relations and promotions. However, his last 10 years at Ak-Sar-Ben were spent as director of racing for one of the highest, daily attended Thoroughbred race meets in the nation.

In 1984 he became vice president and general manager of Canterbury Downs (now Canterbury Park), which was a new track in a new market located just outside of Minneapolis. Twenty-two years later, the attendance and pari-mutuel handle numbers when he was general manager are still unsurpassed.

After 10 years as a consultant for new racetracks, Bowker spent two years at Oaklawn Park before moving to Virginia.

"Throughout my career, I was privileged to work with some of the best management teams in racing," said Bowker. "Every morning I was eager to head to my job at the track. I learned something at every place I have been that has helped me throughout my career and I thank everyone who was a part of it."

As for Bowker's family, his wife of 45 years, Judy, has spent more than 30 years working as a surgical nurse in open heart surgery and his son, Todd, works as a consultant in advance deposit account wagering.

The Commission will begin a nation-wide search for Bowker's replacement in November and the deadline for applying will be February 1, 2008.

About Virginia Racing Commission

The Virginia Racing Commission was established by an Act of the Virginia General Assembly in 1989 to grow, sustain and control the native horse racing industry in Virginia, including control of all horse racing with pari-mutuel wagering that is conducted in the Commonwealth. For more information, please visit www.vrc.virginia.gov.

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